



Royal Commission on the Northern Environment

Arthur Square
215 Red River Road
Suite 201
Thunder Bay P7B 1A5
345-3658

From the Office of
the Commissioner

July 5, 1982

Dear Ontarian: *Current plans of Commission (July 5, 1982)*

It is my pleasure to announce the current plans of this Commission and to advise you how you can become involved in this phase of the Commission's program. Your knowledge and experience will assist me in formulating recommendations to the Government of Ontario.

The Commission was established on July 13, 1977 by Order-in-Council of the Ontario Government. Principally it is directed:

- "1. to inquire into any beneficial and adverse effects on the environment...for the people of Ontario of any...major enterprise north or generally north of the 50th parallel..."*
- 2. to inquire into methods that should be used in the future to assess, evaluate and make decisions concerning the effects on the environment of such major enterprises;*
- 3. to investigate the feasibility and desirability of alternative undertakings...*
- 4. to report and make such recommendations...with respect to the subject matter of the inquiry as the commission deems necessary and desirable to carry out the purpose of the Environmental Assessment Act, 1975."*

POLARPAK

July 9/82

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Subject Matter of the Inquiry

This mandate requires me to make recommendations concerning both the manner in which development should take place in Ontario north of 50° and how decisions about such development should be reached. These two aspects of the subject matter of my inquiry are exceedingly wide-ranging and could be interpreted to embrace virtually every major concern of residents of the north or, indeed, the province. Such an approach would be neither feasible nor appropriate. Conversely, a very narrow interpretation would prevent me from addressing many of the central issues needing resolution in Ontario north of 50°.

Instead, in limiting the subject matter of my inquiry, I have chosen a course suggested by the briefs submitted, the results of my community visits, and by other public input. Over the next several months, I intend to focus my inquiry primarily on those aspects of development involving the allocation, use and management of natural resources. I will be investigating ways of ensuring that resource-based development proceeds in a manner that is more orderly and beneficial and less damaging in its economic, social and natural environmental effects. I will also be identifying opportunities to improve the procedures for reaching decisions about development and environmental protection and to secure more effective public participation in those procedures.

In arriving at my recommendations, I must rely greatly on your views and constructive comments on how to resolve issues related to the subject matter of my inquiry. In particular, I must address questions such as:

1. How could the decision-making processes be improved for the allocation, use and management of natural resources, for land use planning, and for environmental assessment and protection?
2. What approaches towards development in the major resource based industries could increase benefits and reduce negative environmental impacts in Ontario north of 50°?
3. What alternative approaches towards natural resource allocation, use and management could help to strengthen the economic and social base of communities in Ontario north of 50°?

The responses to these and other questions pertaining to the decision-making process and development are the focus of this inquiry.

Commission's Program

A program of research and information-sharing has been undertaken to help achieve the objectives of the Commission and to encourage public involvement. This program will assist you in the formulation and preparation of submissions, both under the public funding program outlined later or independent of it.

The Commission's research projects are concerned with various aspects of the subject matter. For example, the Commission has published reports on the economic future of the forest products industry in northern Ontario and on the application of the Environmental Assessment Act to the road to the Detour Lake mine site. As other reports are completed, they will be announced in our newsletters and made available on request.

These research projects provide basic factual information and analysis to be used both as background material for those preparing written submissions and to support my findings. The public participation program will ensure that those of you who have a stake in the subject matter of my inquiry will be given ample opportunity to state your views.

To be sure that this information is available to you, my staff is embarking on an intensive public participation program, including a series of special meetings and discussions with you. They will inform you about our investigations and advise you in the preparation of your submissions.

For those requiring financial assistance for the preparation of submissions, I am authorized to distribute limited funds. Priority will be given to those proposals which will result in submissions that contain recommendations relating to the subject matter of the inquiry. Requests for funding over \$10,000. will be entertained only in the most exceptional circumstances. Applications for financial assistance must be received no later than August 16, 1982. Funded projects may begin on or after September 1, 1982 and must be completed no later than November 10, 1982. If you would like an Application Form and a Brochure, please mark the appropriate box on the Request for Information sheet.

The Commission intends to hold informal hearings at locations based on the responses of those indicating to the Commission an intent to prepare written submissions. If you are interested in writing a submission, please check the appropriate box on the Request for Information sheet attached and return it as soon as possible.

Those making submissions which relate directly to the subject matter of the inquiry may be invited to be heard, particularly if clarification or additional information is needed. However, I will take into account every submission whether presented at a hearing or not.

Hearings are scheduled to begin the week of November 22, 1982, recess on December 3rd, resume the week of January 10, 1983 and continue until no later than February 25, 1983.

Your thoughts and recommendations about decision making and resource based development need to be known and expressed. I want and need your involvement in this investigation in order to reach satisfactory conclusions for recommendations to the Government of Ontario that will better satisfy northerners and will benefit all Ontarians.

Yours respectfully,

J. E. J. Fahlgren
Commissioner

Ed Langenau

If you have any questions, please contact:

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55 Bloor St. West
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(416) 965-9286

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

I/We intend to prepare a written submission to the Commission. In general terms the subject matter of the submission will include

Revised and refined as before, the following topics:
1. The role of the Commission in the Northern Ontario region.
2. The role of the Commission in the development of the region.

If I/we were invited to present my/our submission to the Commission at a hearing, I/we would prefer that the hearing be held in (name communities in order of preference):
1. Thunder Bay 2. Timmins
3. Red River 4. Port Arthur

Note: Financial assistance for travel may be made available to those invited to present submissions at a hearing.

I/we would like to apply for funding to assist me/us in preparing my/our submission. Please send me/us a Brochure and Application form.

I/we would like a Commission staff member to contact me/us to explain further how I/we might become involved in the Commission's work.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

GROUP AFFILIATION (if any) _____

Please complete and mail to:

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Date Due

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AUTHOR Commission on the
Northern Environment

TITLE

Current plans of Commission

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE DUE

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